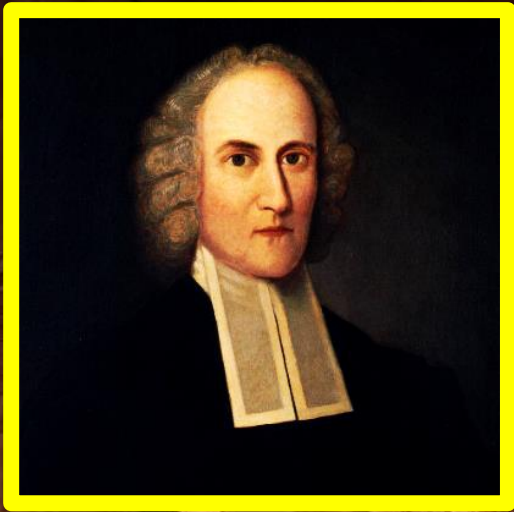
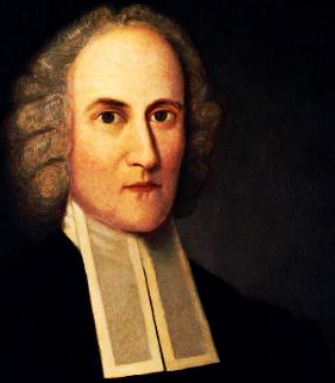


**“SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF  
AN ANGRY GOD”**





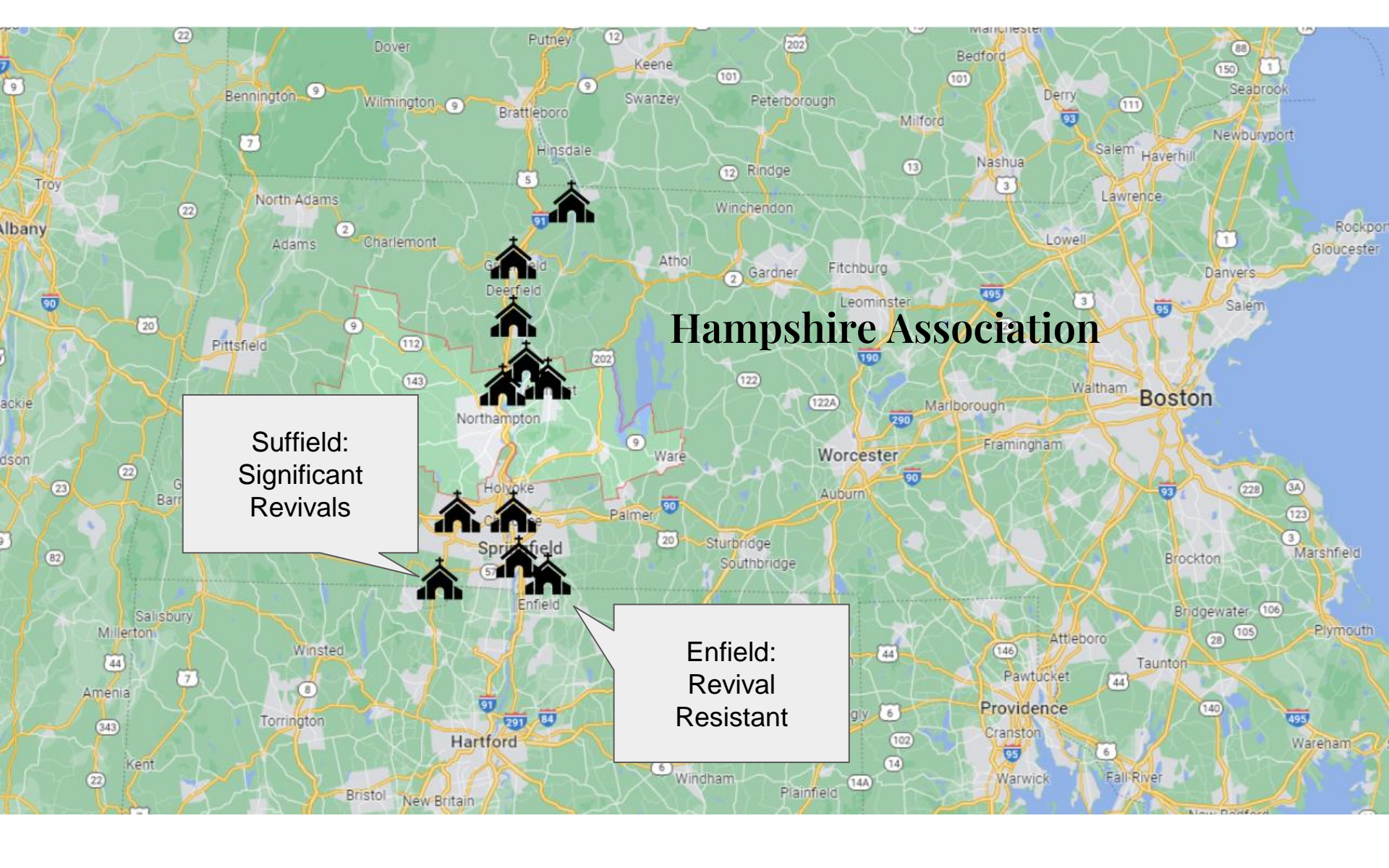
**16.**

**Nothing to do  
with Salem  
Witch Trials.**



# THE TRUTH

- Date of Witch Trials: 1690s
- Date of *Sinners in the Hands*: Wednesday, July 8th, 1741
- Location: Enfield, CT
- Occasion: Edwards was itinerant preaching during the height of the “Great Awakening”



# Hampshire Association

Suffield:  
Significant  
Revivals

Enfield:  
Revival  
Resistant



**15.**

**Not fully**

**representative of**

**Puritan preaching.**

# THE TRUTH

- Solomon Stoddard on preaching Hell: It is compassion and grace!
- Edwards regularly preached on Hell as well.
- But Puritans preached on all kinds of topics: love, grace, politics, marriage, etc.
- Genre: “Awakening Sermon”
- Other kinds of sermons: Expository, communion, fast-day, wedding, funeral, war, commencement, ordination, etc.

**Doc.** There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of Hell but the mere pleasure of G.

Photo  
Credit:  
Tony  
Walker

Doc. There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of Hell but the mere pleasure of G.

For my part by the following Confessions:

1. There is no need of Dreams as on P. to lift them into Hell at any moment when the man had, and he pray when God shall say they the things have no power to do off him. we can say God out of his hand,



**14.**

**Not his best  
sermon.**

# THE TRUTH

- *Sinners* is a remarkable sermon...
- But Edwards is well known for other sermons such as:
- “Divine and Supernatural Light”
- “Distinguishing Marks”
- “Preciousness of Time”
- “Justification by Faith Alone”
- “Excellency of Christ”
- “Praise: One of the Chief Employments of Heaven”



# 13.

**Might not have been  
supposed to preach  
that night.**

# THE TRUTH

- Edwards came to Enfield with several other ministers:
- Stephen Williams (Longmeadow)
- Joseph Meacham (Coventry, CT)
- Eleazar Wheelock

One account has Edwards preaching as a schedule change at the last moment (Iain Murray, 168)



**12.**

**He didn't preach  
staring at the bell  
rope.**

# THE TRUTH

- He was NOT as dramatic as Whitefield, Tennant, or Davenport. BUT
- His style was “easy, natural and solemn.”
- Spoke with “distinctiveness, clearness and precision; his words were so full of ideas set in such a plain and striking light, that few speakers have been able to demand the attention of the audience such as he.”
- “A great degree of inward fervor, without much noise or external emotion, and fell with great weight on the minds of his hearers. He made but little motion of his own heart, which tended in the most natural and effectual manner to move and affect others.”
- “Spake so as to discover the motion of his own heart, which tended in the most natural and effectual manner to move and affect others.”
  
- Source: Marsden, 220.



**11.**

**Should be read  
with 'Heaven is a  
World of Love.'**

# THE TRUTH

- “Heaven is *World of Love*”
- Commentary on 1 Corinthians 13
- Last sermon of *Charity and Its Fruits*
- Joys and Glories of Heaven



**10.**

**The congregation  
was rowdy that  
night.**

# THE TRUTH

- Enfield was supposed to be “revival resistant”
- People came somewhat disrespectfully: “Thoughtless and vain.”
- “Hardly conducted themselves with common decency.”



Photo  
Credit: Tony  
Walker

THIS BOULDER MARKS THE PLACE WHERE  
STOOD THE SECOND MEETING HOUSE OF THE  
FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN ENFIELD. BUILT  
A.D. 1704 AND USED FOR WORSHIP UNTIL 1775.  
IN THIS MEETING HOUSE ON JULY 8, 1741, DURING  
THE REVIVAL KNOWN AS "THE GREAT AWAKENING"  
JONATHAN EDWARDS PREACHED HIS CELEBRATED SERMON  
"SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD"

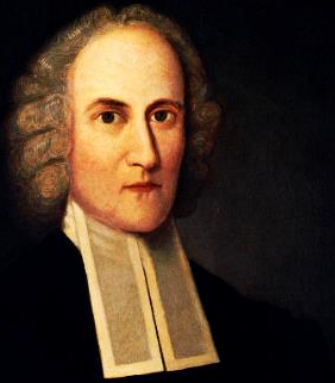


9.

**Addressed old  
people, the young,  
and children.**

# THE TRUTH

- Applications to Each
- And let everyone that is yet out of Christ, and hanging over the pit of hell, whether they be old men and women, or middle aged, or young people, or little children, now hearken to the loud calls of God's Word and providence. This acceptable year of the Lord, that is a day of such great favor to some, will doubtless be a day of as remarkable vengeance to others. Men's hearts harden, and their guilt increases apace at such a day as this, if they neglect their souls: and never was there so great danger of such persons being given up to hardness of heart, and blindness of mind. God seems now to be hastily gathering in his elect in all parts of the land; and probably the bigger part of adult persons that ever shall be saved, will be brought in now in a little time, and that it will be as it was on that great outpouring of the Spirit upon the Jews in the apostles' days, the election will obtain, and the rest will be blinded. (WJE 22:417-418).



**8.**

**He may never  
have finished the  
sermon.**

# THE TRUTH

- JE did not likely get to the glorious ending
- Had to stop to ask the people to be quiet
- Ended with shouting and convulsions
- Wheelock offered a closing prayer, they sang a hymn.
- Pastoral counseling into the late evening.

# THE TRUTH

- “Before the sermon was ended,” Wheelock recalled, “the assembly appeared deeply impressed and bowed down, with an awful conviction of their sin and danger.” (WJE 22:34).
- “I seemed affected & moved — ready to dissolve in Tears etc. -but can’t well tell why.” Rev. Stephen Williams (WJE 22:34).

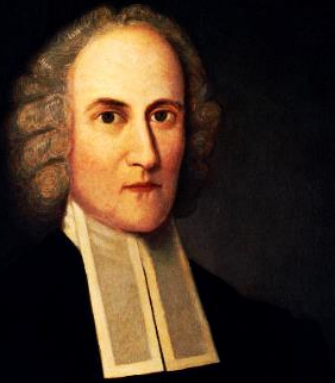


7.

He preached it  
multiple times.

# THE TRUTH

- Previously at Northampton (June 1741)
- At least six other occasions
- Edwards was a classic “re-preacher” of his best sermons.



6.

**The sermon had  
little effect in  
Northampton.**

# THE TRUTH

- Preached June, 1741 at Northampton
- Northampton did not respond to their pastor here, however
- Edwards was considered a revival expert (1745/35)
- Other pastors did have great effect in Northampton in 1740s
- George Whitefield (1740) & Samuel Buell (1742, Sarah Edwards)



**5.**

**Changed the  
main text in later  
preachings.**

# THE TRUTH

- Deuteronomy 32:35 “Their foot shall slide in due time.”
- Third preaching, changed text to Psalm 7:11, “God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day.”



**4.**

**It wasn't primarily  
about Hell.**

# THE TRUTH

- Theme: Inevitability of Judgment
- The weight of YOUR sins are pulling you down.
- God is angry; but merciful!
- It is His compassion that is forestalling your fall to Hell!
- God's grace is the restraining force holding you up!



**3.**

**Used over 20  
terrifying metaphors.**

# THE TRUTH

- Spider web over the fire
- Bow and arrow aimed at your face
- Walking over thin patch of land
- Poisonous viper
- Dam being held back
- Ax
- Troubled Sea
- Black clouds coming

# THE TRUTH

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect, over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times so abominable in his eyes as the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince: and yet 'tis nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment; 'tis to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night; that you was suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep: and there is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up; there is no other reason to be given why you han't gone to hell since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship: yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you don't this very moment drop down into hell. (WJE 22:411-412).



2.

**JE never mentioned  
that night in his  
writings.**

# THE TRUTH

- This event was one of many, many events of the Great Awakening, especially 1740-42. Many similar occasions.
- It was special, but not special enough to write about in either his *Diary* or *Personal Narrative*.
- All we know about that night was written down by Stephen Williams

# THE TRUTH

- Went over to Enfield- where we met Dear Mr E - of N. H. - who preached a most awakening Sermon from those words Deut - 32.35 - and before ye Sermon was done there was a great moaning - & crying out through ye whole House - *What shall I do to be Saved!* - *Oh I am going to Hell* - *Oh what shall I do for a Christ etc.* - So yet ye minister - was obliged to desist - shrieks & cries - were piercing & Amazing - after Some time of waiting - the congregation were still So yet a prayer was made by Mr W - & after that we descended from the pulpit and discoursed - with the people - Some in one place & some in another - and Amazing & Astonishing - ye power - God was Seen - &c Several Souls were hopefully - wrought upon yet - night & oh ye cheerfulness & pleasantness of their countenances - yet received comfort - oh yet God - would strengthen & confirm etc. - we sung an hymn & prayed and dispersed - ye Assembly. (Stephen Williams Journal, WJE 22:34).



1.

It ended with the  
Gospel “open door.”

# THE TRUTH

- Isaac Watts: It should have had more of a word of the Gospel in it!
- “And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has flung the door of mercy wide open, and stands in the door calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the kingdom of God; many are daily coming from the east, west, north and south; many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in, are in now an happy state, with their hearts filled with love to him that has loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful is it to be left behind at such a day! (WJE 22:416-417).